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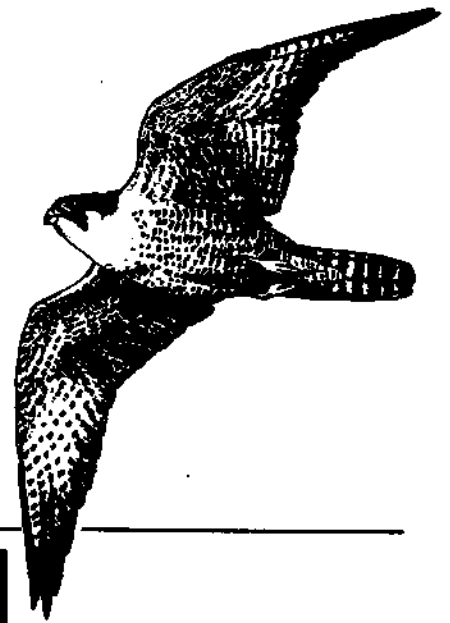
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Washington Department of Wildlife



Serving Washington's
wildlife and people—
now and in the
future



PEREGRINE FALCON

Peregrine falcons are slowly recovering in our state through a combination of natural recolonization in some areas and assistance through reintroductions in other areas. There were a total of 12 active peregrine falcon nests in Washington during 1989 which produced 15 young. Seven of the sites were on the outer coast, four were in the San Juans, and one was in the Columbia River Gorge. Three of these were new nests this year. Peregrine numbers have been slowly increasing in Washington since 1980 when there were only two known nesting pairs in the state.

Two of the nests on the outer coast failed. A dead female and one egg were found at one nest, and three eggs were found at the other abandoned nest. The eggs and female were recovered by Department of Wildlife (WDW) biologists with assistance from the U. S. Coast Guard. The eggs are being examined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for contaminant analysis.

Peregrines are also being re-established in vacant historic habitat. A total of eight captive-reared peregrines were successfully released to the wild in 1989. The department worked with several cooperators, including the USFWS, U.S. Forest Service, Boise Cascade, Washington chapters of the Audubon Society, and the Peregrine Fund to release the peregrines at three sites. Four peregrines each were successfully released from Columbia River and Yakima sites; but a Snake River site failed as a result of probable predation. Captively-reared birds were not available in 1989 for an additional site in Spokane which had successfully released three young in 1988. This was a big disappointment to the state and the Washington Water Power, Spokane Audubon Society, and Washington Falconers Association cooperators. Releases at five sites are planned in 1990.

Extensive surveys were conducted by WDW biologists throughout Washington in 1989 to

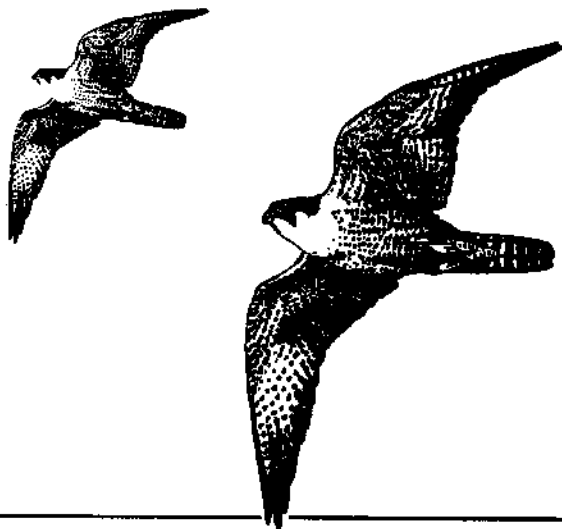
search new areas for peregrine nesting activity. No peregrines were found during these surveys. The department also provided nest site attendants at four of the wild nests to monitor the birds and prevent human disturbance.

In 1989, the federal Peregrine Recovery Team was reorganized and will be amending the existing recovery plan for the next five years. As a result, recovery efforts for peregrines are expected to accelerate in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho during the next several years.

February 1990

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BRINGING BACK THE PEREGRINE

The peregrine falcon is one of the world's most magnificent birds of prey. Its flying abilities are impressive — it reaches speeds of 200 mph as it dives from several hundred feet in the air towards its quarry. Its black "moustache" stripe below the eye, blue-gray back and barred belly, and long, pointed wings give the bird a regal look admired by people for centuries.

Despite its strength and beauty, the peregrine falcon is in trouble. Peregrine falcons are classified as endangered in the United States, including Washington State. The use of pesticides, notably DDT, has poisoned the food chain.

As a result of adult peregrines eating contaminated prey, the shells of its eggs become thin and vulnerable to being crushed during incubation. Peregrine falcons are so sensitive to environmental poisons that they were completely eliminated in areas east of the Rocky Mountains after only 17 years of DDT use.

A sense of good environmental stewardship and actions based on sound principles of wildlife management are needed to protect this species from further declines and extinction.

The Washington Department of

Wildlife initiated a peregrine falcon recovery program in 1978. Our efforts have included extensive surveys of nesting areas, around-the-clock monitoring of active nests, cross-fostering of peregrine eggs into nests of the more common prairie falcon, and releases of captive-bred birds. Despite these efforts, only 12 pairs of peregrine falcons are breeding in Washington; nearly half of these occur in the Puget Sound region.

The Department of Wildlife is now initiating a new phase of the recovery program by establishing nest sites in urban areas of Seattle. Ledges on tall buildings mimic the ledges on cliffs where peregrines like to nest, and falcons have successfully nested in other urban areas across the country.

Peregrine falcons have been sighted in downtown Seattle for several years, although none have yet nested there. To help make downtown Seattle more suitable for these birds, people's cooperation is needed.

The department is working with the Falcon Research Group, Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle Audubon, Washington Falconers Association, city officials, buildings owners, and other interested groups to erect nest

platforms on selected buildings. It is our hope that these nest structures will help the peregrine falcon return and become safely established in areas where it once hunted.

Wildlife and habitat are facing increasing pressures from expanding human populations and land use changes associated with development in Washington. It is only by "Working Together for Wildlife" that the Emerald City can be home to both wildlife and the citizens who appreciate the creatures that share our living space.

For further information, contact Steve Penland or Patricia Thompson, Urban Wildlife Biologists, Washington Department of Wildlife, at (206) 774-8812.

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